

Dear parents and carers,

As the first term draws to a close, I am so proud of how the year 11s have coped with coming back to school after such a long time off. It did feel a lot like when you haven't been to the gym for a long time and trying to regain your fitness is ten times harder! They were all feeling tired and worn out much earlier than normal, yet they have ploughed on! The week off is extremely well deserved and I hope they take the time to recharge the batteries and prepare themselves for term 2.

Term 2 will be busy as ever and you will be receiving their Census 1 data early next term. This will give both you, your child, and Mr Willmer and I, a much better picture of how they are doing in their various subjects and where they need specific academic support.

As always, if you feel that your child needs specific pastoral support, please do reach out to us.

As promised, I have attached the current changes to some of the GCSE courses in terms of content and assessment. I know Miss Upson communicated home regarding the English changes earlier this week. The government and Ofqual may well make further reductions to content but this is what we know at this stage. Any changes, we will of course keep you updated.

The High-Performance Learning focus, for the first week back, is **Empathy**. In particular being 'Collaborative'



'The ability to seek out opportunities to receive responses to your work; present your own views and ideas clearly and concisely; listen to the views of others; be willing and able to work in teams; take a variety of roles and be able to evaluate your own ideas and contributions'

I know that many of our students have shown amazing Empathy during lockdown. Helping others, supporting elderly relatives and younger siblings. When in school we are trying to encourage the students to continue with this Empathetic behaviour. We also create environments where they work together to devise new ideas, solutions, tactics and to give others a chance to contribute to their wider learning. Think – Pair – Share is a strategy we use often in class so that students collaborate and discover the answers together. It is also important to see and hear other viewpoints and interpretations.

As I shared in previous weeks; during these really difficult times, we know that there are lots of parents and carers whose circumstances have changed dramatically. If you have found

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Principal: David James **Vice Principals:** Andrew Fisher Katherine Patterson Gary Wakefield

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that you are suddenly, or currently, in need of financial support then please do remember that you may be eligible to apply for Free School Meals (FSM) for your child. Not only will this ensure that they receive a meal each day in school, but also means that the school receives a small extra pot of money ("pupil premium") that can be directly used to support your child with resources, equipment, trips (when they start happening again!), and so on. You can apply for this directly through the council website using the following link: https://northamptonshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Apply_for_free_school_meals

Moving forward, when we return to school in November, Mr Willmer, the Progress Leader for Year 11, will be writing to you weekly and I will send home a termly letter.

I wish you all a lovely half term.

Yours Faithfully,

Kathryn Wittich-Jackson
Assistant Principal

Ofqual Changes that we know so far are detailed below:

Subject	Changes to date
Art & Photography	GCSE students in Photography and Art will not sit exams this academic year. Their grades will be based entirely on their coursework. Our exam board is AQA.
Design Technology	50% examination, 50% NEA. Permit exam boards to accept mock- ups and/or clear/detailed intentions of prototypes. Permit demonstration of using machinery / tools / processes.
Drama	Drama hasn't had any changes other than the minimum times for the performances has been made shorter.
GCSE Computer Science	No changes to the content but the 20-hour programming project can be completed out of lessons so it will be set as homework to enable students to focus on exam content in lessons. Previously programming project had to have 20 hours of lesson time allocated to it.
Cambridge Nationals in Information Technologies	OCR has stated that students will be given a grade for the examined unit they were entered for in Year 10 therefore students will be completing the controlled assessment work in Year 11.
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory practical fieldwork has been dropped from the 2021 exam. However, OCR is continuing to expect students to apply their understanding of Geographical skills and fieldwork theoretically and will provide worked examples for students to read and then answer questions on. As a result Paper 1 and Paper 2 are each now 5 minutes shorter with the questions about the students fieldwork experience adapted to generic fieldwork skills related questions.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper 1 = Physical Geography 1 hour 10 mins long. Section A = Climate change, Ecosystems, Distinctive landscapes & Global Hazards. Section B = Generic fieldwork questions. The timings work out at approximately 15 minutes per topic with 10 minutes for the fieldwork questions. • Paper 2 = Human Geography. Format same as above. • Paper 3 = unchanged
History	History = the exam will be altered to cut down on the amount of content that needs to be caught up. The exam will therefore offer some optionality in which Unit the students will need to answer.
Maths	No changes at present.
Modern Foreign Languages	French & Spanish - Speaking will be teacher assessed as either Pass, Merit or Distinction (no further details have been given) and the final grade will then be calculated from the other skills of Listening, Reading and Writing with the Speaking Pass, Merit or Distinction given alongside the grade. There will also be an extra question on the Writing exam from which students can choose so they can hopefully have a choice of topics that match their strengths.
GCSE PE	Candidates are only assessed in two practical activities instead of three and the chosen activities can be from either Team or Individual or both.
Religious Studies	No changes at this time
Science	The only changes at the moment in the Sciences (students are still covering the curriculum), is that students do not have to physically participate in the practical activities themselves. This was a requirement for the Core Practicals in GCSE Science. This may mean that students observe a practical instead of participating in the practicals themselves.